



# Community Pub

CASE STUDY



## I The New Inn Warwickshire



### I About The New Inn Pub

Norton Lindsey is a rural hill top village located approximately five miles from the town of Warwick and about six and a half miles from the town of Stratford upon Avon. There are 326 residents in the village, with 19% being under the age of 18 and 34% being over the age of 60. Although a relatively wealthy village, social exclusion is a risk with its rural isolation.

In June 2016 Enterprise Inns put The New Inn, Norton Lindsey, up for sale on the open market and the doors of the pub closed on 22nd July 2016. Offers were received from property developers;

however, no interest was forthcoming from anyone wanting to run it as a pub, so it looked as though the village would lose the pub, a historic landmark in the village, having been an Inn since 1750.

Fortunately, Norton Lindsey Parish Council had registered the pub as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) with Warwick District Council on 27th August 2013. As soon as the pub closed, the community used the ACV to their advantage, triggering an expression of interest and a six month moratorium. However, the ACV was due to expire in December 2016, which gave the village only five months to consult with residents, to make a bid and raise the necessary funds to purchase the pub.

The pub was purchased on 12th December 2016 and the doors were opened once more on 13th April 2017.

## I First steps

Immediate action was taken by Rob Brook, a local resident, and a month after the pub went on the market, a highly skilled village team dubbed the 'Salvation Squad' was recruited. Responsibilities were divided and the team set to work.

A community survey was sent out to every resident, to gain feedback on what facilities and activities it was felt should be offered. A community share prospectus was also circulated to potential shareholders: this provided important information about what investment would be needed from the community to help raise the funds, it also explained how pledges could be made to move the project forward.

With essential feedback from the community, indicating that the village would fully support a pub/restaurant/café and shop in equal measure, a business plan was written and a legal structure was created. The original members of the Salvation Squad became the founding members of the Community Benefit Society and Norton Lindsey Community Pub Limited was born.

Following an action planning meeting, Plunkett arranged for the group to undertake a funded study visit to The Anglers Rest in Bamford, Derbyshire where they met with a Plunkett Foundation Specialist Adviser and received a warm and informative welcome.

They continued to seek advice from the Anglers Rest management committee and exchange best practice on a regular basis.

**Rob Brook, Chairman, said:**

**“Our vision was to not only save our historic pub, but to also turn it into a hub for the community with additional facilities. We only had a limited amount of time to get our act together, and we are not a big village, so we decided to extend our reach and have both a community share offer and a crowd funding option which would appeal to people living further afield.”**

As well as support from the Plunkett Foundation Advisers, the group also consulted with independent Industry consultants, and previous landlords of The New Inn, so as to ensure the business plan was robust.

Greg Judd, a property expert and a member of the group, negotiated the purchase price with Enterprise Inns. The cost of the freehold was £312,500 (excluding VAT) and in total the community would have to raise around £450,000 to cover the purchase and refurbishment of the pub and to provide some working capital.

A strong media campaign was started to promote a crowd-funding appeal, and the community share issue was launched at the end of October, giving the group just over a month to raise the funds.







## I Key strengths

The group approached the Plunkett Foundation, Key Fund and Pub is the Hub for guidance and support. They applied to the More Than A Pub programme and were awarded a £2,500 bursary, which paid for the structural survey, registration as a Community Benefit Society, and model rules and membership of the Plunkett Foundation.

Norton Lindsey Parish Council donated £500 towards the initial 'fighting fund' with an additional loan facility of £2,000 should it be required. The community share issue campaign was successful and £324,000 came from 226 community shareholders.

Under the More Than A Pub programme, Key Fund provided a loan of £50,000 and a grant of £50,000 was also awarded to help secure the acquisition of the pub.

**“The Key Fund did a great job in responding to our tight timescales. When push came to shove and we really needed the support, they pulled it out of the bag. The loan and grant package enabled us to get off on the right foot. We were able to bring the premises up to standard and ensure they were fit for purpose before even starting to trade. When you start to run a business it’s difficult to close the business and carry out remedial works – having the money at the beginning was perfect timing.”**

The group also received grants from Pub is the Hub and Warwick District Council provided funding which has been ring-fenced to pay for the creation of a small local shop.

**“We all have a shared goal now: to make the pub a success for years to come. Any profits the pub makes can be reinvested to further improve the premises or be used to benefit other community facilities such as the village hall and playground. This project is already bringing about greater community cohesion, and achieving our goal has given the community a real sense of empowerment and pride.”**

## I Legal model

As a Community Benefit Society, the Management Committee is voted in annually by shareholder members and the officers are elected in line with the Society’s Model Rules. Community Benefit Societies are also run on a democratic one member-one vote basis.

## I Key strengths

1. A sense of common purpose and pride not only for shareholders but the villagers and stakeholders.
2. Social cohesion – the pub is now THE meeting place for local community.
3. Having the pub in the community brings economic and environmental benefits to the area – jobs for students and local residents. Local food and drink producers also benefit and food miles are reduced.

## I Social Impact

In addition to its role as a village pub, The New Inn has a café and there are plans to open a local shop (linked to a nearby village store). The pub also intends to offer a number of other facilities to local residents, the wider rural community, and visitors of all ages.

The village has a number of elderly people and poor public transport so the creation of a local shop means those residents will be able to buy essential everyday items locally or even order. Other services will be available in due course – for example: a parcel drop off facility and a laundry and dry cleaning service. In the future the shop may also be able offer customers a range of home-made take-away meals.

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34% of the village is over 60, with many young people under 18, and although Norton Lindsey is a relatively wealthy village, social exclusion is a risk for this community with its rural isolation. The pub encapsulates the meaning of community and it offers more than just food and drink – it is a vital social hub for everyone in the village.

Over time, the café is going to work towards the development of friendship circles, extending the service provided outside of the pub's traditional trading hours. It will offer a wider range of drinks, food, and activities that will encourage even more social interaction. This will ensure the reach of the current customer base is extended to include parents with babies / small children, parents collecting their children from school and older residents based in the village. It will also be the focal point for social and hobby gatherings such as book clubs, a memory café, and quiz nights.

Library facilities have been created for both adults and children, with a 'take-one-leave-one' book exchange.

Installed by a local charity these were decorated by volunteers and have proved very popular.

The pub specialises in catering for families and a large team of volunteers have worked hard to create a fenced off 'enchanted' garden for the children. It has a living willow tunnel, a safe and child-friendly surface to encourage play, bark paths and a number of small tables and chairs made out of logs. Parents can overlook the garden and remain relaxed whilst keeping an eye on the children. In the summer there are also plans to hold story telling sessions.



Wherever you are in the UK, if you are interested in starting or developing a community pub please contact the Plunkett Foundation - **01993 810730**, [info@plunkett.co.uk](mailto:info@plunkett.co.uk) or visit [www.plunkett.co.uk](http://www.plunkett.co.uk) to find out how we can support you.

The Plunkett Foundation helps rural communities UK-wide to tackle the issues they face by promoting and supporting community business. In addition to developing and safeguarding valuable assets and services, community businesses address a range of issues including isolation, loneliness, wellbeing, work and training.

If you share our vision for a vibrant rural economy with rural community business as its heart, why not join Plunkett as a member? Find out more about our membership packages [here](#).

This case study has been made possible through the More than a Pub programme, funded by Power to Change and the Ministry of Housing, Community and Local Government.



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